ISO 9001 Takes On a New Role— Crime Fighter

by **David Amari and Don James as told to Cathy Marley**

I n a sector in which credibility is everything, the Phoenix Police Department's (PPD) Records and Identification Bureau (RIB) decided to reinforce its reputation as a reliable information provider. In July 2003, it accomplished this by becoming the first law enforcement organization in the United States to achieve ISO 9001 registration.

The RIB, with more than 195 employees who together work around the clock, maintains and disseminates a variety of important records for the PPD. As in any police department, accurate and thorough record keeping is a critical function in the legal process. Phoenix is the sixth largest city in the country, so the PPD processes a tremendous volume of information.

Our criminal records unit alone can receive as many as 11,000 telephone requests a month from officers and other law enforcement agencies. Requests range from criminal background checks to checks for outstanding warrants.

Our growing list of responsibilities includes such duties as:

- Maintaining records relating to incidents, arrests, bookings, impounds, repossessions and forensic imaging.
- Fingerprinting and photographing suspects.
- Teaching officers to use the police department's records management computer system.
- Training PPD personnel in both ink and electronic fingerprinting.

In 50 Words Or Less

- **The Records and Identification Bureau of the Phoenix Police Department achieved ISO 9001 registration and, in doing so, improved its credibility.**

- **The process mapping exercise it used before the audit proved to be the most valuable part of the experience.**

- Performing criminal history records checks for City of Phoenix employment applicants and for law enforcement purposes.
- Providing fingerprinting services for citizens who need to provide fingerprints to other agencies, including the Department of Nursing, Department of Education and state licensing boards.

> ## It is not unusual for a person who is a customer in one context to be a supplier in another.

Unlike private industry, in which customers and suppliers are generally clearly defined, we serve internal and external customers who can include attorneys, courts, police officers, other police agencies, reporters and the public. Of course, criminal suspects must be included in that list as well, and, since they are innocent until proven guilty, we have to treat them with as much dignity as any of our other customers. It is not unusual for a person who is a customer in one context to be a supplier in another.

All Leads Point to ISO 9001

Our pursuit of registration began in 2000 when we began to refocus our departmental energy to shift from a production based to a knowledge based organization. The materials, or knowledge, we disseminate to the public and handle for the department, officers, detectives and suspects are so critical and potentially damaging that people's lives are often on the line.

Recognizing that, we knew the information we provided had to be entirely accurate. Misidentifying somebody or disseminating information improperly was simply not acceptable. We also knew that if our process did allow a mistake, we had to have a way to fix it. With that in mind, we began to concentrate on the quality of our processes.

After significant research, we realized what we needed was ISO 9001 registration. It focused on improving the process and established guidelines and goals against which we could measure our achievements. We also believed registration was an excellent way for us to ensure a high level of departmental credibility.

Of course, once we identified ISO 9001 as a goal, we needed to find a way to realize it. We were pleased to discover Business Enterprise Mapping in Scottsdale, AZ, right in our own backyard. Its consultants use a process mapping methodology that not only prepared us for registration but also helped us achieve a variety of other objectives, such as:

- Improve departmental credibility.
- Increase departmental responsiveness.
- Reduce mistakes.
- Ease backlog.
- Streamline business processes.
- Improve efficiency.
- Improve safety.
- Improve communication across departments and functions.
- Encourage employee interaction.
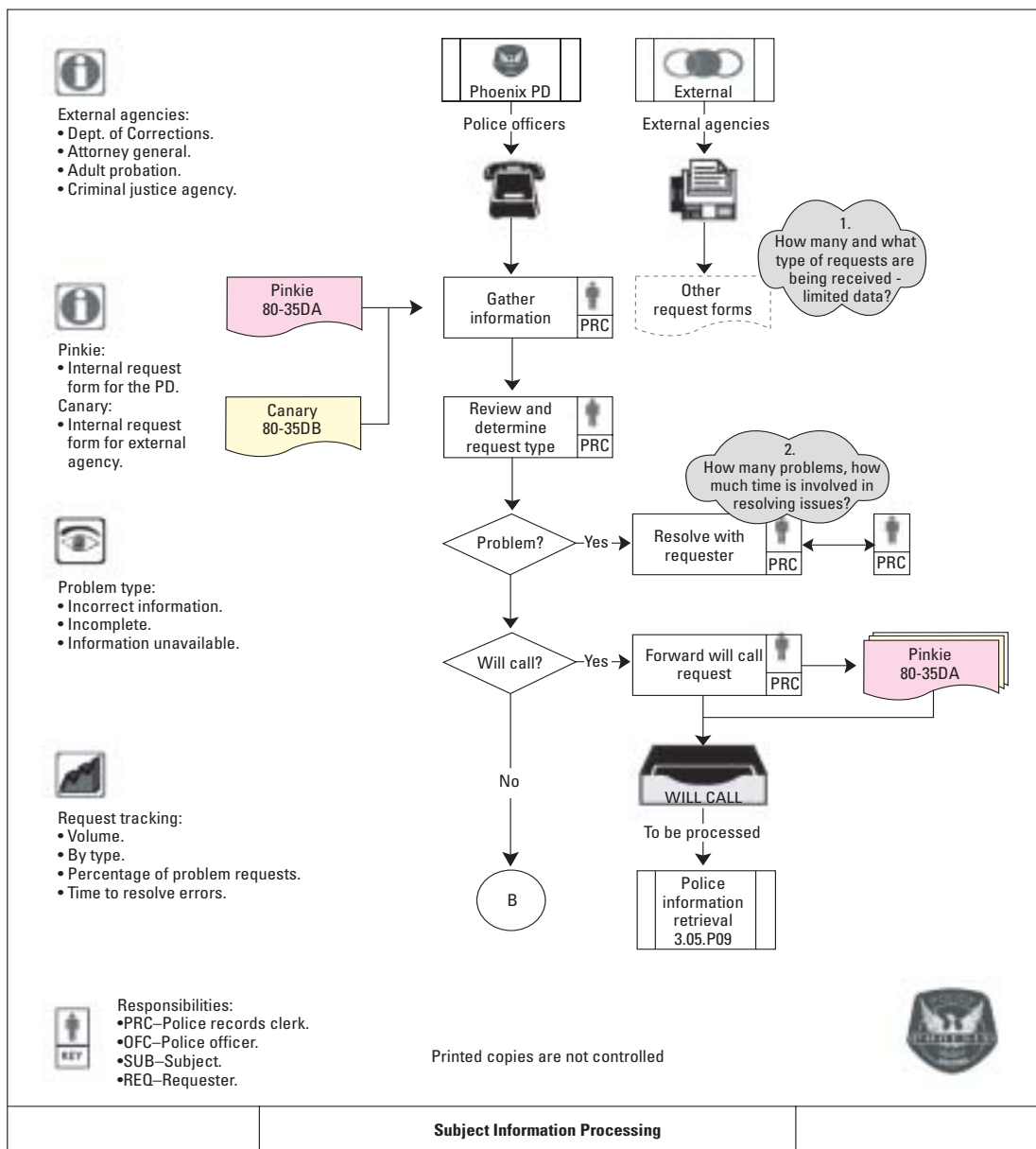- Establish guidelines and goals to measure achievements.

The Map to ISO 9001

With the help of Business Enterprise Mapping, we began preparing for ISO 9001 registration in August 2002. Its consultants started by identifying key processes and developing a process map (see Figure 1), providing a complete picture of how we operate and how workflow processes connect.

After working with RIB management to identify 20 process owners, Business Enterprise Mapping conducted all-day process owner training sessions. These sessions were key to identifying best practices and introducing efficiencies into the system.

The maps also highlighted opportunities for improvement across the organization, so the consultants conducted problem solving training. Thanks to that training, the RIB identified 440 areas for improvement, 154 (35%) of which were addressed with simple improvements to processes prior to ISO 9001 registration. Some of the improvements were as simple as computerizing a form, our internal cash receipts report, that was being typed by hand on a multipart paper form.

FIGURE 1 First Page of a Nine-Page Process Map

External agencies:
• Dept. of Corrections.
• Attorney general.
• Adult probation.
• Criminal justice agency.

Pinkie:
• Internal request form for the PD.
Canary:
• Internal request form for external agency.

Problem type:
• Incorrect information.
• Incomplete.
• Information unavailable.

Request tracking:
• Volume.
• By type.
• Percentage of problem requests.
• Time to resolve errors.

Responsibilities:
•PRC–Police records clerk.
•OFC–Police officer.
•SUB–Subject.
•REQ–Requester.

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Subject Information Processing

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It was only after our processes had been fully mapped that we began ISO 9001 education and preparation for the audit. Our last step prior to the final audit was to have TUV America's San Diego office conduct a preliminary audit. TUV America is accredited to provide third-party certi-

fication services for ISO 9000 by the Registrar Accreditation Board.

The combination of the mapping process, the entire department's commitment and the preliminary audit led to a smooth final audit with only one minor discrepancy.

At the time of the audit, we were in the process of collecting customer satisfaction data. The audit found our inputs to management review regarding customer satisfaction and complaints insufficient.

Since then we have developed additional methods for measuring customer satisfaction levels, including instant capturing, recording and reporting of customer input obtained spontaneously outside traditional survey techniques. In-person

Teams are making decisions rather than receiving management edicts, which gets far more buy-in from everyone.

information exchange sessions with patrol officers have solidified our understanding of customer needs and provided additional opportunities for improvement.

Results

Our biggest improvements have stemmed from the introduction of the graphics based electronic process maps. While traditional flow charts, or maps, were being created internally, we never would have created the detailed graphic maps had it not been for our decision to pursue ISO 9001 registration. These maps are living documents each employee can access. Employees are encouraged to suggest possible changes to processes, ensuring the continuing value of the maps.

The changes the RIB made as a result of the mapping have produced significantly positive benefits:

- We had been manually typing information into our six-part cash receipts form, rather than using the computerized version of the form. On investigation, we found we were the only organization in the city still using the old form. The resulting savings were in both the cost of the forms and the extra time required to use a typewriter.

- Our criminal records unit reduced the average time it takes to process a request by approximately 20 seconds. This may seem like a minor time saving, but it adds up to 60 hours of time saved per officer each month.

- The maps revealed a number of safety issues related to the booking process. We resolved them with a series of actions, including adding a wall to the booking area to separate prisoners and officers from the public and installing benches for prisoners and a work counter for officers in the holding area. As is common, the solution resulted in additional challenges, but we used the problem solving tools we learned from Business Enterprise Mapping to resolve them quickly.

- To log incident reports, we use a recording device that, despite being computerized, has historically experienced a significant backlog. Using the mapping process to analyze the way that job was being done, we determined several steps that could be combined or eliminated, allowing a time saving of approximately five minutes per report. That translates into a time saving of 75 minutes per day per person, a significant step toward easing the backlog.

- The mapping process even provided benefits to our budgeting procedures. Historically, management would solicit input on needs during the three weeks prior to preparing the budget. Those needs would then be added to a database we used to create the budget. However, because of the brief input time, many items were overlooked. Using the problem solving process, we decided to maintain the database year-round. That allows us to input requested items as the needs for them arise. As a result, we miss fewer items during budgeting.

The mapping has also resulted in improved cross shift communications and greater standardization, resulting in greater efficiency and job satisfaction. As we were standardizing the process with the maps, everyone was encouraged to approve changes, resulting in work unit buy-in and a willingness to follow the process or initiate formal change. Having such communication and agreement is important in the government arena because people often become entrenched and resent change, even if it's for the better.

The mapping process alone has helped us build an organization focused on identifying and resolving problems that affect efficiency, credibility and safety. The process mapping methodology allows us to critically analyze things on a regular basis. Teams are making decisions rather than receiving management edicts, which gets far more buy-in from everyone.

The positive results we achieved certainly merit close scrutiny as an indicator of the tremendous potential the mapping and ISO 9001 process present for benefit to the entire public sector.

We are all optimistic our non-conventional application of ISO 9001 and registration will make a strongly positive statement about the city of Phoenix and the PPD's commitment to quality and the community. It could prove to be a major draw for businesses and industries looking at Phoenix as a possible site for relocation, a goal that is certainly high on the list of priorities for any major city today.

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